

Besides, there would still be time to come back, if the upper plateau proved to be as barren as the shore, if it were unsuitable for a settlement, if from the extreme summit no other land were to be seen in the proximity* If the castaways from the *Flag* found they had landed on an island or islet, they would return to the cave and make their arrangements to meet the winter there.

Directly the meal was finished the men took the bundles of provisions. The first cave was left, and, with the albatross walking beside Jenny, all went through the mouth of the passage.

When they came to the mouth of the gorge, Fritz and Frank went through first. After them came Jenny, Dolly, and Susan, holding little Bob's hand.

Captain Gould and James came next, and John Block closed the rear.

At first the gorge was so narrow that they had to walk in single file.

It was really nothing but a cleft in the solid rock, running in a northerly direction between two vertical walls which rose to a height of eight or nine hundred feet.

After a hundred yards or so in a straight Ene, the ground began to slope upwards rather

steeply-

The way must be a long one, for if it did
debouch

upon the plateau it would have had to
make up the

five hundred feet or so from the level of
the beach